Clearance of customs prosecution cases

*131. SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:
SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of a very large number of prosecution cases pertaining to customs duty evasion pending in various courts of law, Government propose to set up special courts in consultation with the State Governments with a view to clearing the cases expeditiously; and

(b) if so, what progress has been made in this direction so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) There is no proposal to set up special courts for economic offences exclusively for dealing with the customs duty evasion cases.

(b) Does not arise

Impact of new import/export policy

*132. SHRI N.E. BALARAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that by permitting the import of copra, coconut oil, rubber, rubber products, clove, nutmeg, coir and coir products under OGL following the announcement of the new Import/Export Policy, there has been a decline in the prices of these cash crops to the detriment of the agricultural economy of the States;

(b) whether the State Governments have made any requests to the Central Government to withdraw permission for such imports; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI): (a) to (c) Under the Import and Export Policy for April 1988—March 1991, import of copra, coconut oil and natural rubber continues to be canalised as was in the earlier policy. There is no change in Import Policy for rubber products, coir and coir products. Only cloves and nutmeg have been shifted from the Canalised List to the Open General Licence List. No request has so far been received by the Government for withdrawal of permission for import of these items. At present there is no proposal for change in the import policy for these items.

Plan to prevent the spread of desert area

*133. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that ten States and the Union Territory of Delhi are likely to miss normal monsoons due to massive depletion of forests cover on the country's major mountains like the Himalayas, Aravalis and Western Ghats; if so, what steps Government propose to take check such deforestation;

(b) what steps are being taken to prevent the spread of natural arid zones in Thar Desert in Rajasthan and the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh;

(c) whether Government contemplate a special plan to prevent the spread of desert area in the above mentioned places; and

(d) if so, what are the details of such a special plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) There is no scientific evidence to establish that depletion of forest cover causes disturbance to normal monsoons.

(b) A number of measures such as afforestation, pasture development, shelter belts, sand-dune stabilisation and water conservation have been taken up under the Desert Development Programme, Drought Prone Area Programme, Integrated Rural Development Programme and Na-

tional Wastelands Development Board to control spread of arid zones and deserts.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Indo-Soviet Trade

*134. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what was the target fixed for the year 1987-88 in respect of Indo-Soviet trade;

(b) whether the target was achieved or whether there was any shortfall; and

(c) what steps are being taken to increase the volume of trade between India and the U.S.S.R.?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI): (a) to (c) Trade Plans for Indian exports to and imports from USSR are drawn up on a calender year basis. The targetted Indo-Soviet trade turnover for 1987 was Rs. 3800 crores and the actual implementation is assessed to have crossed the target by about 18 per cent. The target for 1988 has been fixed at Rs. 5000 crores. Efforts are being made from both sides to achieve the target.

A series of steps have been initiated to increase the volume of trade between the two countries. These include expansion and diversification of items included in the trade basket, setting up of a group to study the mattter of diversification of structure of trade and economic cooperation, participation in trade fairs, organisation of specialised exhibitions, conducting studies and market surveys for promotion of trade, identification by DGTD of possible areas for import of technology, conclusion of an Inter-Governmental Agreement to promote new forms of cooperation such as joint ventures, production cooperation, cooperation in the services sector, improving institutional links at the level of business organisations, etc.

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Narmada Sagar Project

*135. SHRI CHANDRIKA PRASAD TRIPATHI:
SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the work on the Narmada Sagar Project in Madhya Pradesh is going on as per schedule;

(b) whether Madhya Pradtsh Government has requested the Central Government for financial assistance for the project; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof and what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) According to information received from the State Government, the work on the dam, formally started on 19th November, 1987, is proposed to be completed by June, 1996.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The projects in the irrigation sector are funded from State Plan resources. Central Plan Assistance is provided as block grant and loan and is not tied to any specific project. However, this project has been posed to the World Bank for assistance.

Import of Gold

*136. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) How much gold in terms of weight and value is imported into India every year by way of replenishment allowed against export of gold, jewellery since the revised scheme was announced in August, 1985;

(b) what are the details of the jewellery exported after the announcement of the revised scheme and the value thereof;